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9th graders get another year to sign up for College Bound Scholarship

OLYMPIA— In its first year, Washington’s College Bound Scholarship program enlisted more than 16,000 low-income 7th and 8th grade students to work toward the goal of free college tuition at eligible two- or four-year colleges, universities and vocational schools.

During the 2008-09 school year, eligible 9th graders will get a one-time opportunity to join the 7th and 8th graders who add their names to the College Bound Scholarship list this year. The Legislature provided an additional year because the College Bound Scholarship program was new last year.

“The College Bound Scholarship provides valuable help to Washingtonians of modest means who are struggling to realize the dream of college and postsecondary training for their children,” said Ann Daley, Executive Director of the Washington Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB), which administers the College Bound Scholarship program. “We hope current 9th graders who missed out last year will take advantage of this special opportunity to get College Bound.”

Eligible students include those who qualify for free or reduced-price school lunches and all foster youth. Students must sign a pledge to stay in school, demonstrate good citizenship and graduate. Students will receive the scholarship if they fulfill the pledge, are admitted to college, complete a FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid), and meet the income requirement. An estimated 56,000 students statewide qualify for the program.

Students can complete the signup process by applying online, www.hecb.wa.gov/collegebound or completing a paper application.

In addition to providing college financial assistance to students who most need it, the program also encourages students to take the courses they need to gain admission and succeed in college.

The state’s new [Strategic Master Plan for Higher Education](#), endorsed by the Governor and Legislature earlier this year, recommends that for Washington to remain competitive it must expand efforts to enroll and graduate more low-income and minority students.

“Providing a highly educated workforce will be a key to Washington’s economic prosperity in the years to come, and the College Bound Scholarship is one way to help ensure that young people from low-income families have the opportunity to participate,” Daley said.

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